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# STORIES FOR CHILDREN

MRS. M. R. ALLEN

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**STORIES FOR CHILDREN**



# STORIES FOR CHILDREN

BY

MRS. M. R. ALLEN

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## PREFACE

As all peoples have their folk tales, so we of the South have ours also, and the fascination over the child mind of Negro tales is one of our tenderest memories. In the nursery the gloom of rainy days was lightened, our sorrows were banished, and our lives made brighter through their magic influence. They have been balm for many imaginary as well as actual ills.

In order to preserve a few, at least, of the tales most enjoyed by the generations of the past I have collected those here presented, faithfully reported as told by the Negroes themselves, with all the crudities that that implies—and which indeed constitute one of their chief virtues. While some of the charm may be lost through the telling at second hand, yet I trust that the children of to-day and of the future will find some pleasure in them.

M. R. A.

*January, 1912.*



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# THE TAR BABY



# I

## THE TAR BABY

ONCE upon a time a Fox had a lot of Bee-gums in his garden, and he would go in every morning and find his honey all gone.

So he concluded he would make him a Tar Baby to put at the gate to ketch the one that was stealing his honey.

That night Mr. Rabbit came to the gate, and he said to the Tar Baby, "Who are you? I never seed you before; whar did you come from? Why don't you speak to me, sir? If you don't, I'll slap you over!"

The Tar Baby wouldn't speak, so Mr. Rabbit slapped him. And his hand stuck. So Mr. Rabbit was mad then. So he said, "You had better turn me loose, I've got another hand here, and I will pop that to you." And he slapped him with that; and that stuck! So Mr. Rabbit got madder, and said, "You had better turn me loose, you grand rascal! When I do git good mad, I'se a plum sight. You shorely don't know who you fooling with. I've got a good foot



here; it is better than my hand; I'll use that on you." So he kicked him; and his foot stuck.

And he jerked his other foot, and kicked him with that; and that stuck. So he said, "I'm getting mad now, mad for good. I've tired of this fooling. I'm going to butt you with my head." And he butted him; and that stuck. Then Mr. Rabbit begun to beg, "Please turn me loose, I has to go home to my motherless children."

But the Tar Baby held him tight and fast for Mr. Fox. So the next morning when Mr. Fox came in his garden he said, "Why, heigh-ho! what are you doing here, Mr. Rabbit, hugging my Tar Baby so tight?"

"I come here to borrow some honey from you, and this little old fellow grabbed me."

Mr. Fox says, "All right; just let him hold you a while longer, until I get ready for you." So he went and made up a big fire down by the briar thicket. And he then took Mr. Rabbit loose from the Tar Baby, and took him down there, and told him he was going to throw him in the fire.

Mr. Rabbit said, "I'm so glad you are going to throw me in the fire; I was so afraid you would throw me into that briar patch. I'm so afraid of briars!"

So Mrs. Fox was along, and she said, "Throw

him in the briar patch! throw him in the briar patch!" "No, please don't; have mercy on me! I'm afraid of briars," said Mr. Rabbit.

So Mr. Fox thought he was afraid of them sure enough, so he threw him in the briar patch. And Mr. Rabbit jumped up, and cracked his heels together and said, "This is where I was bred and born! This is where I was bred and born! Briar patch is my home," and ran away.



# THE TWO BIRDS



## II

### THE TWO BIRDS

ONE time there was two birds lived together in a house—Red Bird and Blue Bird. Red Bird was named Jim and Blue Bird was named Sarah.

Jim got up soon one morning and made up a big fire, and said to Sarah, "I am going off this morning; you must lock the door and keep it locked until I come back, to keep out the Bears. When I come, I will knock twice, and say, 'Poo-nan-nan, Poo-nan-nan.' Then you can open the door."

An old Bear was under the house listening at him, and as soon as Jim left, the Bear came to the door, and in a coarse voice said, "Poo-nan-nan, Poo-nan-nan!" And Sarah said, "You can't fool me; Jim has got a finer voice than that." So in a fine, squeaking voice the old Bear said, "Poo-nan-nan, Poo-nan-nan!" So Sarah said, "That ain't Jim, either; his voice ain't that fine." So then in a voice like Jim's, the

Bear said, "Poo-nan-nan, Poo-nan-nan!" Sarah clapped her wings and flew to meet him.

When she opened the door, the Bear caught her and carried her down to the canebrake, and eat her up.

When Jim come home and knocked twice and called, "Poo-nan-nan, Poo-nan-nan!" and nobody opened the door, he pushed it, and found it was not locked. So he went in and saw one feather and one drop of blood. And he said, "I know the Bear has caught my poor Sarah."

And he followed the blood and feathers clean down to the canebreak, and saw where the Bear had eaten her up. So he laid his head on his wing and died.

# THE RABBIT AND THE PEAS





### III

## THE RABBIT AND THE PEAS

LONG time ago there was a Bear that had a fine pea patch. He and his wife had to work in the field every day, so they left their little girl at home to keep house. So one fine morning Brer Rabbit came up to the house and called the little girl, "Mary, Mary, your father and mother told me to come up here and tell you to put me in the pea patch and let me have as many peas as I want." So Mary put him in, and he stayed there until nearly twelve o'clock, and then he begun calling, "Little girl, little girl, come and let me out; I'm full for this time!"

So she let him out, and he went home. At dinner when her father and mother came home and saw their pea patch they were mad, and said, "Who has been in these peas?" "Why, didn't you send Brer Rabbit to get as many as he wanted?" said Mary. "No, I didn't; no, I didn't," said Mr. Bear. "And the next time that rascal comes here with that sort of tale, you just keep him in there until I come home."

So the next evening Brer Rabbit come back again, and called, "Mary, Mary, your father told me to tell you to put me in the pea patch, and let me have all the peas I want." "All right," said Mary; "come on." So she put him in and fastened him up.

So as it begun to grew late, Mr. Rabbit begun to call, "Little girl, little girl, come and let me out!" "All right," said Mary, "when I put down my bread for supper." After a while he called again, "Little girl, little girl, come let me out!" "When I milk my cow," said Mary. When she finished milking he called again, and she said, "Wait till I turn my cow out."

By that time Mr. Bear came home and found him in his pea patch, and asked him what he was doing in there. "Your little girl told me you said I might have some peas," said Brer Rabbit. "Well," said Mr. Bear, "I'll put you in this box until I get rested and eat my supper, then I'll show you a trick or two." So he locked him in the box and went to the house.

After a while Brer Fox came along the road and Brer Rabbit called him, and Brer Fox said, "What are you doing in there?" "They are going to have a ball here to-night and want me to play the fiddle for them. So they put me in here. I wouldn't disappoint them," said Brer

## THE RABBIT AND THE PEAS 23

Rabbit. "But, Brer Fox, you always could beat me playing the fiddle. Now they offer to pay two dollars for every tune. Suppose you take my place; my wife is sick and I must go home—if I can git off."

"All right," said Mr. Fox. "I'm always willing to make money, and if you don't want to stay I will take your place."

"Well, look on top of the box and git the key. I saw Mr. Bear put it there," said Brer Rabbit. So Brer Fox unlocked the door and Brer Rabbit hopped out and locked Brer Fox in.

So after supper they all come out, and the little girl run up to the box and looked in, and said, "Oh, mamma! just come and see how this Rabbit has growed!"

Mr. Fox said, "I ain't no Rabbit!" "Well," said Mr. Bear, "how come you in there?" "Because Brer Rabbit asked me to take his place, and play at your ball to-night," said Mr. Fox.

"Well, Brer Rabbit has fooled you badly, Fox. But I will have to whip you, anyway, for letting him out. I'll help you find Brer Rabbit." "I'll hunt him till I die, to get to pay him back for fooling me so," said Mr. Fox. So Mr. Bear said, "All right," and they all started out to find Brer Rabbit.

And they soon came upon him, and he begun

to run, and all of them after him. And they got him in a tight place, and he run up a hollow tree.

And they had to go back for their axes. So they put a Frog at the tree to watch him to keep him from getting away. After they were gone, Mr. Frog looked up and saw Brer Rabbit chewing. "What's dat you chewing?" said Mr. Frog. "Tobacco," said Brer Rabbit. "Give me some," said Mr. Frog. "Well," said Brer Rabbit, "look up here and open your eyes and mouth wide." So he filled the Frog's eyes full of trash. And while Mr. Frog was rubbing his eyes trying to get the trash out so he could see, Brer Rabbit run out and got away.

When Mr. Bear and Mr. Fox got back with their axes, they asked Mr. Frog, "Whar's Mr. Rabbit?" He said, "He's in dar." They cut down the tree and didn't find him. Then they asked Mr. Frog again, "Whar's Mr. Rabbit?" "He's in dar," said Mr. Frog. So they split the tree open, and still didn't find him. And they asked Mr. Frog again, "Whar's Mr. Rabbit, I say?" "He's in dar," said Mr. Frog.

"Now, Mr. Frog," they said, "you have let Mr. Rabbit get away, and we are going to kill you in his place." So Mr. Frog says, "Wait till I go to my praying ground, and say my pray-

## THE RABBIT AND THE PEAS 25

ers." So they told him he might have five minutes to pray.

And there was a pond near by, and a log on the edge of it. So when Frog got on the log he bowed his head and said, "Ta-hoo! ta-hoo! ta-h-o-o!" Splash! and he was gone! And the Bear and Fox were outwitted again.



# **SIMON THE FISHER**





## IV

### SIMON THE FISHER

ONE time there was a little boy went fishing on Sunday. His name was Simon, and he caught a big fish, and as he was going home the fish said,

“Carry me home, Simon, like a little man.

Go, draw your water, Simon, and scald me if you can!”

So Simon went and drew his water and put it on. And then the fish said,

“Clean me good, Simon, like a little man;

And when I’m clean, Simon, put me in a pan.”

So Simon got him all ready and cooked him, and the fish said,

“Go to the old field, Simon, like a little man;

And sit on that stump by the side of the creek and eat me if you can!”

So Simon went to the field and got on the stump, and eat his fish. So when he had finished, the fish said,

“Open your mouth wide, Simon, like a little man.

And let it stay open till I jump out, and run as fast as you can.”

So Simon opened his mouth wide, and the fish jumped out, and turned to a giant, and eat Simon up—because he went fishing on Sunday.



# THE LITTLE HUNTER



## V

### THE LITTLE HUNTER

ONCE upon a time there was a little boy who used to go hunting before day. His name was Bobbie. So one morning when he got back home he found he had lost his blowing horn. So he looked about the house and couldn't find it anywhere. And he started back to the woods to hunt for it.

And on the way he met up with a Bear. And the Bear said, "Where are you going, little boy, so early in the morning?" Little Bobbie told him he was going to hunt his blowing horn. So the Bear said, "Let me go with you; I'm a good hand to look for things that are lost." And Bobbie said, "Well, come with me, then." So they went on together until they found it.

Then the Bear says, "Let me hear you blow your blowing horn." So the little boy blew: "Blow-jing, blow-jing; blow my horn in the morning before day!" Then the Bear says, "Get up on my bushy tail, and blow your blowing horn." So the little boy got up and blew:

“Blow-jing, blow-jing; blow my horn in the morning before day!”

So the old Bear said, “Get up on my bushy back and blow your blowing horn.” So the little boy got up and blew: “Blow-jing, blow-jing; blow my horn in the morning before day!” “Get upon my bushy head and blow your blowing horn,” said the Bear. So the little boy got up and blew: “Blow-jing, blow-jing; blow my horn in the morning before day!”

So then the old Bear said, “Now get up on my nice slick tongue and blow your blowing horn.” So the little boy got up and blew: “Blow-jing, blow-jing; blow my horn in the morning before day!” And just as he finished blowing the old Bear swallowed him down—whole.

# THE GOOBER CROP





## VI

### THE GOOBER CROP

MR. WOLF made a fine goober crop and built a nice house to put his goobers in. And he made the door so that every time he said, "Ball-eye, Wall-eye," it would fly open. And when he said, "Ball-eye, Shut-eye," the door would shut.

So one night Mr. Fox went there to watch Mr. Wolf, to see how he got in. And hid himself until Mr. Wolf left, then he went to the door and said, "Ball-eye, Wall-eye," and the door flew open. And he went in and eat, and eat, and eat. So when he had plenty he went out.

The next day he met Brer Wild Cat. And said, "Brer Wild Cat, would you like to know a good place to get as many goobers as you want?" "I shore would," said Brer Wild Cat. "Well, you just go down to Mr. Wolf's goober house, and say, 'Ball-eye, Wall-eye,' and the door will fly open, and when you get enough, just say, 'Ball-eye, Shut-eye,' and the door will shut."

So Brer Wild Cat went running down to the

goober house and called out, "Ball-eye, Wall-eye," and the door flew open, and he went in and closed the door. So when he got as many goobers as he wanted, and filled his bag to carry home with him, he went to the door and he had forgotten what to say. So he called and he butted and kicked the door, but it wouldn't come open. He made so much fuss that Mr. Wolf heard him at the house, and he says, "Wife, I hear a mighty noise down at my goober house; I believe I'll walk down and see what is to pay."

So when he got there he found Brer Wild Cat, ripping and snorting good fashion. And he said, "How come you in my goober house?" Brer Wild Cat said, "Mr. Fox sent me here for a sack of goobers, and told me how to get in, and I forgot how to get out."

Mr. Wolf said, "I'll Mr. Fox you!" So he tied him to a stump, and went back to the house for his whip. When Mr. Wolf was gone Mr. Rat came hopping by, and Brer Wild Cat said, "Mr. Rat, I was taking some exercise on this old stump and got tied up in this knot. Can't you chew this cord for me, old fellow?" "Yes, certainly, my brother," said the Rat. "I'm always ready to help others out of trouble!"

So he cut the cord, and Brer Wild Cat was free again. So he said, "Just let me show you

how this thing caught me." So he slipped the cord on the Rat's foot, and tied him hard and fast, and went running home.

When Mr. Wolf came back with his whip he looked at the Rat and then at the stump, and said, "The lack a day, old man Wild Cat, how you is swunk! I'll let you loose, old fellow, before you finish turning to a 'Sperit.' I always was afraid of ghosts, and a Wild Cat that can dry up that fast must be conjured!"



# THE BEE TREE



## VII

### THE BEE TREE

MR. POSSUM and Mr. Squirrel wanted some rice, and didn't know how to get it, for they didn't have any money. So Mr. Possum says, "Let's take our wives to town and sell them, and then we can get as much rice as we want." Mr. Squirrel didn't like that plan, for he didn't want to sell his wife, for he loved her, but he didn't want to make Mr. Possum mad with him, either, for he wanted some of his rice when he got it. So he tied his wife with a cotton string, so she could get away. And Mr. Possum tied his wife with a twine string. So they started to town, and on their way Mrs. Squirrel got away. So Mr. Possum said, "Never mind; I'm going to carry mine on any way. And when I buy my rice, I'm not going to give you one bit."

So Mr. Possum went to town, and sold his wife, and bought him a nice sack of rice, and as he was coming home Mr. Squirrel was lying stretched out across the road like he was dead. Mr. Possum said, "Poor Squirrel! I guess you



think you will fool me, and make me give you some rice; but I know your trick; you ain't dead; you are just possuming!"

So he passed on, and when he was out of sight Mr. Squirrel jumped up and run through the woods, and threw himself across the road again.

So when Mr. Possum came up again Mr. Squirrel was lying across the road again. So Mr. Possum said, "This looks mighty like the same Squirrel I just passed. I'll just run back and see if that other Squirrel is there still." So he set his rice down and went back. So as soon as he was gone, up jumped the Squirrel, and, taking the sack of rice, was soon out of sight.

So when Mr. Possum got back hot and panting, he found his rice and Mr. Squirrel both gone. And he was mad, and went running on, and met an Ant. So he said, "If you don't tell me which way that Squirrel went with my rice, I'll stamp the life out of you!" So the Ant said, "He is in that hollow tree, the one with the Bees flying around it. We call it a Bee tree." So Mr. Possum said, "Ha! ha! I'll stop him up, and let the Bees sting him to death." So he stopped him up. But Mr. Squirrel was so fleet of foot he came running out at the top, unharmed, and all covered with honey, and licking himself. So as Mr. Possum looked at him, he

said, "Mr. Possum, just taste; how sweet!" Mr. Possum tasted, and forgot all about the rice, and said, "I believe I'll go in and get some good honey." So he went in, and Mr. Squirrel run and stopped up the tree at the top and bottom. So after a little while the Bees begun to sting the Possum, and he tried to get out and couldn't. So he begun to call, "Mr. Squirrel, Mr. Squirrel, come quick and help me! My old woman's ghost is after me, and she is pulling my hair all over. Open the hole and let me out! I'm dying!" "You ought to die," said Mr. Squirrel. "Anybody that would sell their wife for a mess of rice can't die too hard."

So Mr. Squirrel went off and let the Bees sting him to death—because he sold his wife.



# ROVER, MY CUR DOG



## VIII

### ROVER, MY CUR DOG

ONE time there was two little children, a little girl named Sally and a little boy named Johnny.

One evening they were coming home from school and a Bear got after them, and they run up a tree. And the Bear saw them up there, and he was hungry, so he begun gnawing the tree. And the children begun to cry and were nearly scared to death. At last, when the tree was nearly cut down, Johnny begun to call his dog, "Rover, Rover, my cur dog, my cur dog!"

So, 'way off, the dog thought he heard his master's voice. And he listened, and pricked his ears, and wagged his tail. And again he heard the call, "Rover, Rover, my cur dog, my cur dog!" So with a bark and bound Rover started off and followed the sound of John's voice. And when he got to the tree, he gave a bark and the Bear a growl.

And they flew at each other, and such a fight you never saw.

There was a man cutting wood near by, and

he heard the fuss, and got there just as Rover was nearly broke down. So he took his ax and killed the Bear.

And the children got down and hugged and patted Rover for saving their lives, and they all went home. And the dog was the pet of the house after that.

Sally and Johnny couldn't wait on him enough, and nothing was too good to divide with him.

# JACK THE GIANT KILLER





## IX

### JACK THE GIANT KILLER

LONG time ago there lived a Giant named Nero. He lived in a fine house, and had everything that heart could wish. But he was a mean old fellow. He would carry off people's children, and steal their hogs and sheep, and do all kinds of mischief to annoy and distress his neighbors.

So after he had taken the rounds and caused all the women and children to stay hid for days, a brave little boy named Jack said he was going to kill the Giant.

So one fine morning when the Giant was away from home, Jack took his hatchet and started to the Giant's house. On the way he met up with a Rooster, and the Rooster said, "Where are you going, Marse Jack?" "I am going to the Giant's house," said Jack. "Let me go with you?" said the Rooster. So Jack said, "Well, come on."

He went on a little farther and met a Cat, and the Cat said, "Where are you going, Marse

Jack?" "Going to the Giant's house," said Jack. "Let me go with you?" said the Cat. So Jack said, "Well, come on."

So he went on a little farther and he met a Bee, and the Bee said, "Where are you going, Marse Jack?" "Going to the Giant's house," said Jack. "Let me go with you?" said the Bee. So Jack said, "All right, come on."

So he went on a little farther and met a Ram, and the Ram said, "Where are you going, Marse Jack?" "Going to the Giant's house," said Jack. "Let me go with you?" said the Ram. So Jack said, "All right, come on."

He went on and met a Bull, and the Bull said, "Where are you going, Marse Jack?" "Going to the Giant's house," said Jack. "Let me go with you?" said the Bull. So Jack said, "All right, come on." So they all went on, and soon got to the Giant's house.

Then Jack said, "Now, Rooster, where will you sleep?" "On the gate post," said the Rooster.

"Now, Bee, where will you sleep?" said Jack. "In the candlestick," said the Bee.

"Now, Cat, where will you sleep?" said Jack. "In the fireplace," said the Cat.

"Now, Bull, where will you sleep?" said Jack. "At the foot of the stairs," said the Bull.

“Now, Ram, where will you sleep?” said Jack.  
“At the top of the stairs,” said the Ram.

So Jack took up his hatchet and went upstairs.

After a while the Rooster began to say, “Yonder he comes, yonder he comes!” And the Giant caught him and pulled his head off. So he went in and started to light the candle, and the Bee stung him. So he killed the Bee.

He went to make a fire, and the Cat scratched him. So he stamped the Cat, and killed it.

So he went to go upstairs, and the Bull butted him up, and the Ram butted him down. The Bull butted him up, and the Ram butted him down, until the old Giant was nearly dead. Then Jack run out with his hatchet and cut his head off.

So the Giant’s house and all of his gold belonged to Jack. And he was always called Jack the Giant Killer. And the people all loved him, because he was so brave.



# THE MAY QUEEN



## X

### THE MAY QUEEN

ONCE upon a time there was a Rabbit named Miss May Queen, and the boys all loved her, because she was so pretty and sweet. And they would go to her house every night, and carry her to parties and balls. So one night there was going to be a big dance at a girl's house named Sarah Nickols. And Sarah didn't like Miss May Queen. So she made a plan with a boy named Tom Piper to get May Queen to spend the night with her, and after the company all left they would kill her, because she was jealous of May Queen, who could beat her dancing, and was the best looking, and had the most sweethearts. That was why Sarah wanted to get her out of the way.

So when the ball broke up Sarah went to Miss May Queen, and told her she wanted her to stay all night with her. So Miss May Queen said, "Well, I will; I've always wanted to be good friends with you, Sarah, and I hope we will make up for good to-night." So they went on



back to the parlor, and Tom Piper was still there, and he drew his chair up close to May Queen and begun to talk love to her. So every time he would pull his chair up close to her she would move hers away, until at last she got mad, and went to open the door and go out, and it was locked. So she went to one window, and it was nailed down.

So she turned to Sarah and said, "What does this mean? Is this the way you treat your invited company?" Tom spoke up and said, "We just wanted to have a little fun with you."

But she understood what they meant, for she was a graveyard Rabbit, and they couldn't do her any harm. So she just worked her foot at Sarah and Tom, and they fell over dead! You can't fool with graveyard Rabbits. They are dangerous. But Sarah and Tom Piper didn't know Miss May Queen lived in a graveyard—if they had they wouldn't have fooled with her, but they thought she was just a plain Rabbit!

# THE BABES IN THE WOODS



## XI

### THE BABES IN THE WOODS

LONG time ago there was an old Man who had a big family of children, and he was mighty sick and poor, and they had nothing in the house to eat. So he said to his wife one day, "It's hard, but we will have to get rid of some of these children; we can't feed them, and they will just starve to death here before our eyes. So you take them off in the woods and leave them, and we will pray to the good Lord to take care of them and show them the way to a good home, where they can get something to eat."

So they knelt down and prayed God to watch their babies, and not let the wild beasts eat them up, and let no harm befall them. So after their prayer was finished they got up, and the mother washed and dressed them in the best they had, and they started for a walk, as their mother told them. So the little children were delighted, and chatted and laughed until they began to grow tired. And then the poor woman kissed them and told them to sit there and rest until someone

came for them. So they were so tired they soon fell asleep and didn't wake up until next morning. Then they began to cry, because they were so hungry.

And Willie said, "Katie, let's pray for something to eat; that's the way mamma and papa used to do when they wanted anything." Baby Kate said, "Dod tan't hear us 'way out here. I wants my mamma so bad!" But they both knelt down and Willie prayed God to send them something to eat. And when they had finished their prayer and got up there was a table before them, full of everything nice to eat. So they sat down and eat, and eat, and eat; and after they had eaten enough the table went away.

So every time they would get hungry they would pray, and the table would come back.

So one night they were sitting and talking, and Willie jumped up and said, "I believe I see a light. I'm going to climb up in this tree and see." So up he climbed, and said, "Yes, it is; yes, it is! We will go to it, Katie, right now."

So they started out and soon came to the house, and a lady came to the door. Willie told her they were lost, and they wanted to stay all night. The good woman looked troubled, and said, "Why, children, this is the Giant's house, and don't you know he eats children?"

Willie said, "Oh! please don't turn us away; Baby Kate is so tired." "Well," she said, if you are willing to stay, I can't turn you off, but I'm afraid the Giant will kill you."

So she gave them some supper and then put them to bed with her own children.

Little Kate was soon asleep, but Willie kept awake to see what was to become of them.

Late in the night he heard the old Giant come in, and as soon as he opened the front door he began:

"Fe—fo—fum,  
I smell the blood of an Englishman;  
Be he live or be he dead,  
I'll grind his bones to make my bread."

Who have you in this house, Wife? No fooling me, remember!" "Just two children who are lost, and asked shelter for to-night, and would not be turned away," said the little woman. "Can't you spare their lives just this time for my sake? They are so near the age of our little children!"

"Go," said the Giant, "and put red caps on their heads and white ones on our babies. How dare you ask me to spare their lives!" So she went, for she knew what that meant.

As she put the cap on little Kate she kissed her, and said, "I did all I could to save your little life, but it did no good."

Little Willie had been awake all of the time, although he lay like he was asleep while she put his cap on. But his mind was busy. He was thinking how he could get away. So after everything was still, he thought, "I'll take the red caps off our heads and put them on the Giant's children, and put the white caps on our heads." So he jumped up and changed them right away, saying, "He will kill us anyway, and this is my only hope. I can't do anything else."

When Willie heard the Giant snoring he waked Katie up, and told her what he had done. "And now," said he, "we must get away from here as fast as our legs can carry us." So they got up and slipped out, and run as fast as they could. And when they would get too tired to go, they would rest, and then get up and start again. And they run on until they came in sight of a house, and they went to it and found an old lady living there all alone. They told her they were lost, and wanted to stay there and rest. And she told them she needed a boy and girl, and if they were good children and would help her do her work she would let them stay all of the time.

They promised her they would, and at first they all got on nicely. But in a few days the old woman begun to grumble and complain and find

fault with everything they did. Nothing would please her. She gave them hard tasks—that they could not possibly finish—and then whip them because the task wasn't done.

One day she told little Katie to go and fetch her a sifter full of water! So when the little girl got to the spring and begun filling the sifter the water would run out; as fast as she would put the water in, it would run out.

So she sat down and begun to cry. And there was a little Bird sitting on the tree over the spring, and he begun to sing:

“Line it with moss, and daub it with clay,  
Then you can carry your water away.”

The little girl jumped up and said, “What did you say, little Birdie?”

The little Bird sung again:

“Line it with moss, and daub it with clay,  
Then you can carry your water away.”

So the little girl got up and went to work and fixed her sifter, and filled it with water and carried it to the house.

When the old woman saw the girl bringing a sifter of water she whipped her, and called her a witch, and said she was going to burn her up. So she made Willie make up a big fire and put on a great big pot of water to scald Katie in, and



told him to call her when the pot got to boiling.

So when the pot begun to boil Willie called, "Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Smith, come quick and see if the water isn't hot enough." And the old woman came and stooped over the pot to feel the water, and Willie pushed her in, and she scalded to death.

So then he and his sister had a nice home and plenty to eat, so they went to find their mother and father and the children. And they all lived together, and were happy. God takes care of those who ask Him.

# **THE FARMERS**



## XII

### THE FARMERS

MR. RABBIT and Mr. Fox had a house together, and they were making a crop. So one day when they were in the field hoeing cotton every now and then Mr. Rabbit would stop and holloa, "Hoopee!"

Mr. Fox would say, "What is the matter?" "Somebody at the house keeps calling me," said Mr. Rabbit. And he would stop his work and go to the house. And when he come back Mr. Fox would say, "What is the matter at the house?" "My wife is sick," said Mr. Rabbit.

The truth was they had some butter at the house, and he was pretending like somebody was sick and calling him, so he could get to eat the butter. And he kept going to the house until he had eaten all of the butter up.

So twelve o'clock came, and it was time for them all to stop work and go home to dinner. But Mr. Rabbit begun to grunt, and say, "I'm sorter sick; I've been running in the sun too much this morning. I believe I will just stay here in the shade of this tree while you all go to dinner. I don't want anything to eat, any way."

“Well,” said Mr. Fox, “you had better go; you need a rest.” So they both started on, and when they got to the house, they begun fixing their table. And Mr. Rabbit went to get the butter to put it on, and he came running back and told Mr. Fox somebody had been there and eat the butter all up. And while they were talking Mr. Possum came up, and Mr. Rabbit said, “I bet Mr. Possum eat that butter. Let us make up a big log heap fire, and all jump over it; and the one that eat the butter will fall in, and you will see the fat frying out of him.”

So they made up the fire, and Mr. Rabbit said, “Now, Mr. Possum, you jump first; and, Mr. Fox, you turn your back till he jumps.”

So Mr. Rabbit said, “One, two, three; ready—jump!” And just as Mr. Possum made the spring to jump Mr. Rabbit pushed him in the fire. And he run round to the other side himself, and called Mr. Fox and said, “I told you Mr. Possum eat that butter. Just see it frying out of him now.”

So Mr. Rabbit had Mr. Fox so badly fooled about the butter. He was happy, and he went to the house singing:

“Through the rock, through the steel—  
Through the old spinning wheel;  
Shink, shank, skinny bone,  
Such a tale was never known!”

# THE WITCH



## XIII

### THE WITCH

ONCE upon a time a man married a Witch. But he didn't know it. He thought he was marrying a nice, sweet girl.

He was rich, and had two houses—one in town and one in the country. So after he married he wanted to move to the country, and his wife wanted to stay in town. So she said to him, "If you move away from this house, you can't rent it, for nobody else will live in it. It's haunted; everybody says so." "I never heard that before," said the husband. "But I will move out right away, and let Mr. Smith move in and try it. He told me he wanted it, yesterday." So in a few days he moved out and let Mr. Smith move in.

So that night Mr. Smith's family were all in the room talking, and a great big White Cat came walking in, holloing, "Mew, mew, mew!" and jumped up and put out the lamp. They tried to kill her, but she would get out of the way, and they couldn't hurt her. So she went from



room to room, crying and mewing and making such a fuss that they were all scared nearly to death.

So the next night the Cat came back, and did the same way. And the next night, she came again, until the folks moved out. They couldn't stand it any longer.

Well, some more people moved in. They were named Brown. And the old White Cat come again and put out the lamp, and went all through the house, and did the same way every night until she run them out.

At last a man came to rent the house, and he saw the woman, and knew she was a Witch just as soon as he set his eyes on her, because he was a Witch Doctor from Witchville!

So he told the man he wanted to rent his town house. And the man told him he couldn't stay in it, for it was haunted!

"Well," said the Doctor, "I'm not afraid of ghosts. They and me are friends." So he moved in, and the first night the old White Cat came mewing and mewing around, but nobody seemed to mind her. And when she started home the man followed her and he found out where she lived.

So the next evening he went out in the country and told the man if he would let him stay

there all night, and hide him, and not let his wife know anything about it, he would ketch up with his ghosts.

So the man hid him away, and after dark the Doctor begun watching, and after a little while the old White Cat came creeping out of the house, looking first one side, and then the other; and then went running down the road.

So the Doctor went in the house and looked all around, and found her skin in the front room. So he waked up her husband and showed it to him. "Now," he said, "you see your wife is a Witch. Now, you go back to bed, and wait till she comes. I will sit up and watch for her." So he took her skin and rubbed it all over with red pepper and put it back where he found it. Then he went and hid and waited for the Cat.

After a while she came sneaking home and went in the room, and jumped in her skin and went to bed without making a bit of fuss. And in a little while she begun to jump around and say, "Ouch! ouch! ouch!"

Her husband said, "What is the matter?" "I'm burning," said she. "I don't see no fire," said he. "It's in my skin; it's in my skin;" and as she said that, she jumped out of the bed and begun to dance around the floor. "Ouch! ouch! ouch! It's in my skin! it's in my skin!"

So the Witch Doctor came to the door, and as she sung out, "It's in my skin," he said, "Well, you jump out and I'll jump in!" So the old Witch jumped out, and the Doctor took her skin. "Now," he said, "it is the law here in this country to burn up Witches; but nobody knows you are a Witch, and if you will promise me you will be a Witch no more I will cure you and never tell on you."

So she promised to behave and be a good wife, and he gave her skin back, and it was all right, and she never was a Witch any more.

# THE STEPMOTHER



## XIV

### THE STEPMOTHER

AWAY back yander in old times there lived an old man who had a big family of children. And his wife died, so he married him another, to keep house for him.

One day soon after they married his new wife couldn't find any meat to cook for dinner, so she said, "I'll just kill Johnny; he's fat, like a little pig, and his daddy won't know anything about it till he's eat up. Then it won't do no good to fuss. He's got too many children here, anyhow."

So she called Johnny and said, "Johnny, I'll give you a piece of bread and butter if you will go upstairs and put your head on that block and go to sleep." Little Johnny was so hungry, he said, "Yessum, I'll go."

So she gave him the bread and butter, and he went upstairs and laid his head on the block.

After he had been there a little while his stepmammy went tip, tip, to the foot of the stairs and said, "Johnny, is you sleep?" "I haven't

quite eat my bread and butter up yet," said Johnny.

So after waiting a while, she went again, and called, "Johnny, is you sleep?" In a low voice came the answer, "Mam!"

So she went back and waited a little longer. And then called, "Johnny, is you sleep?" No answer! So she went tip, tip, tip, upstairs, and he was sound asleep. So she took her little hatchet and cut his head off, and took him and put him in the pot and cooked him for dinner.

So when his daddy come home to dinner and they all sit down to the table, he said, "Why, what is this you've got for dinner?" "Just a nice fat pig I bought," said the old woman. And then he said, "Where is Johnny?" "He's under the bed, sleep. He's under the bed, sleep," said the old woman. So they all went to eating. And a little bird came and lit on the house and said, "My mammy kill me; my daddy eat me; my little sister set at the table and suck my bones."

"What is that?" said the old man. "It's nothing but a bird, it's nothing but a bird!" said the old woman. So she run out and scared it away. After she got back and sit down at the table the bird came back and sung louder than before, "My mammy kill me, my daddy eat me;

my little sister set at the table and suck my bones!" So the old woman jumped up and run out again. "Shoo, shoo; it's nothing but a bird; it's nothing but a bird." "Yes, it is," said the old man. "It's Johnny's ghost. You have killed my boy!" "No, I haven't; no, I haven't!" said the old woman. And while she was talking, telling such a lie, God let a stone fall from heaven and mash her in the ground. God will always punish the wicked.





# THE STOLEN CHICKEN



## XV

### THE STOLEN CHICKEN

“MAMMY, whar’s dat big pot?” “What’s der matter now, Sandy,” said the old woman. “Dem niggers been stealing Marsers’ chickens again, and I’m going to find out which one it is!”

So the old white-headed man went to work to get the pot, and then called the children to help him catch a big fine rooster.

“What are you going to do, Uncle Sandy?” said little Charley. “Gwine to ketch a thief, chile,” said the old man. “How are you going to tell who it is this time, Uncle Sandy? You always have a new way.”

“I’m gwine to put dis chicken under de pot, chile,” said the old man, “and make de colored folks jine hands, and go round de pot and tech it. And when de one dat stole dat chicken teches dat pot, dat rooster shore to crow!” “Uncle Sandy, how do you know so many tricks?” said Charley.

“’Cause, Honey, dis nigger smothered a live mole in his hand when he was a boy, and he can tell fortunes ever since dat! I shore is wise, and

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dem niggers knows it, too; dey can't fool with me."

So when dinner time come, all the colored people come to the house for their dinner, and when they had eaten Mr. Jones went in and told them Uncle Sandy wanted them all in the yard.

Uncle Sandy and his wife Mammy were the oldest colored people on the place, and they were allowed to do just as they pleased.

So the other darkies knew when their master told them to mind Uncle Sandy, they had it to do. So they all went.

And when they got out there the old man had a stool, sitting close up to the old pot. And he said, "Some of you is been stealing chickens! And I want you to jine hands, and go round dat pot, and tech it; and when de man dat stole dem chickens teches it dat rooster under dar is shore to crow."

So they joined hands and started round, and Uncle Sandy put his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands, and begun singing in a doleful tune:

"Here we go round the old black pot, the old black pot, the old  
black pot,  
And tech it as we go;  
And when the rogue teches it, on the spot, on the spot, on the  
spot,  
Dat rooster shore to crow!"

By that time all the folks had been round. "Now, come up here," said Uncle Sandy. "Show me your hands." So everyone that come had smut on his finger until he got to a big black fellow. And when Uncle Sandy looked at his hand he fell on his knees and begun to beg, for he hadn't touched the pot; and he just made out he did. And he didn't have any smut on his finger, and he knew Uncle Sandy would know he was the one that had been stealing.

"Don't let Master whip me this time, Uncle Sandy, and I'll never steal any more. I'll work all night and pay for dem chickens! I'll do anything if you just don't let Marster whip me."

"Well, Jim," said Mr. Jones, who had been watching Uncle Sandy from the porch, "I won't whip you this time, but I'll make you shell corn to-night two hours. But the next time you steal I'll give you one hundred lashes, young man!

"Now, Uncle Sandy, I thank you. I'm glad you smothered that mole when you were a boy, and can find out who the rascals are from my good darkies. I wish every farmer did have an Uncle Sandy to help him keep things straight."

Be sure your deeds will find you out!



# **MR. FOX AND MR. RABBIT**





## XVI

### MR. FOX AND MR. RABBIT

ONE time there was a Fox and Rabbit lived together, and they were both in love with the same girl, and she liked Mr. Fox the best.

So one Sunday morning Mr. Rabbit dressed himself up in his Sunday clothes and went to see Miss Jane. And he told her, "Now, I do believe you are in love with Mr. Fox. And I'm going to tell you the truth about him; but I don't want to hurt your feelings, Miss Jane; but you are a friend of mine, and I think you ought to know. Mr. Fox is just my riding horse, and I just keep him to wait on me. Now, if you don't believe it, you just sit at the window this evening and I will show you."

So he went back home, and Mr. Fox said, "Where have you been, Mr. Rabbit?" "Just over to one of the neighbors to see about that fence," said Mr. Rabbit.

"Well, after dinner let us go to see Miss Jane," said Mr. Fox, for he didn't know Mr.

Rabbit had been there. "My walk has made me a little sick," said Mr. Rabbit, "and I can't go without you carry me on your back part of the way."

So Mr. Fox said, "Of course I will carry you part of the way, friend Rabbit, if you feel sick."

So after dinner Mr. Rabbit he came out with his saddle and bridle and his walking stick. And Mr. Fox said, "What on earth you going to do with them things? I'm no horse!"

Mr. Rabbit said, "I just thought I would put them on, to keep from ruining my Sunday clothes."

"All right," said Mr. Fox; "but when you get half way, you must get down and hide those things, and walk the rest of the way; for I wouldn't have anybody see us for the world. But you are my friend, and I think a heap of you, and won't go back on you when you are sick."

Mr. Rabbit promised him that he would get down when he said so. And they started off.

When thy got half way Mr. Rabbit begun to grunt and say, "I'm so sick! I'm so sick! Just carry me a little farther. I can't walk, and I know you will not leave me out here by myself."

So good Mr. Fox carried him on. When they got in sight of the house Mr. Fox said, "Now,

Mr. Rabbit, please get down! I can't carry you one step farther."

"Oh, Mr. Fox, don't do your old friend this way! I'm too sick to walk, and the windows are shut, and the doors too. Nobody can't see you. Carry me up close enough for me to crawl to the house."

So kind Mr. Fox went a few steps farther. Then Mr. Rabbit gave a loud call, "Hoopee!" and begun whipping Mr. Fox with his walking stick. And everybody run to the door and laughed and clapped their hands. And Miss Jane said, "Look here, Mr. Fox, don't you ever come to see me again. I don't want to keep company with Mr. Rabbit's riding horse!"

So Mr. Rabbit hopped off mighty spry, and run in the house and said, "Now, Miss Jane, you see how near that sly Fox came to fooling you." "Yes, Mr. Rabbit," said Miss Jane, "I am very much oblige to you." And she married him.

Poor old Mr. Fox was so ashamed he hung his head and run home, and packed up his things and moved away, because he didn't ever want to see Mr. Rabbit again, for he knew if he did there would be a fight.

Thus we see that kind acts and good deeds are not always rewarded in this life.



# WHY BEARS HAVE NO TAILS



## XVII

### WHY BEARS HAVE NO TAILS

ONCE there was a Turtle went fishing, and caught a long string of fish, and on his way home he met a Bear.

And the Bear said, "Where are you going, Mate Turtle, with them fine fish?"

"I'm carrying them home to my wife," said the Turtle. "Well," said the Bear, "I believe I will go home with you and take dinner, Mate Turtle!" "All right," said the Turtle, "but maybe we had better go back to the creek and catch a few more fish. I don't think we have enough for a good mess for us all."

"All right, Mate Turtle, if you say so," said the Bear. So they went back to the creek, and it was turning awful cold, and beginning to sleet. And when they got to the creek there was a hole in the ice. So the Turtle said to the Bear, "You just put the bait on your tail and put it in that hole. I've got no hook and line for you, but you can tell better when the fish bite that



way." So the Bear fixed the bait, and stuck his tail in, and then said, "Ouch! it's cold!"

"Just keep it in there a little while and it will get warm," said the Turtle.

So in a little while the Bear says, "I've got a bite," and went to take his tail out, and it was froze.

And the Turtle said, "Pull, Mate Bear, pull! Pull, Mate Bear, pull!" And the Bear pulled till he pulled his tail off. So he begun to growl and turned to eat the Turtle up, and the Turtle jumped in the creek with his fish and was gone!

So the Bear had to go home, leaving the fish and his tail behind him. And since that time Bears haven't had any tails—only stumpy ones.

So you see they are not all true friends who seem to be.

# THE THREE FOOLS



## XVIII

### THE THREE FOOLS

ONCE upon a time there was a young man courting a girl, and he called to see her one night. And the old folks liked him so well they wanted to give him some cake and cider.

So the old woman went down to the cellar to get the cider, and turned the cider on, and forgot to put her pitcher under it. And she sit down and went to thinking.

She stayed so long that the old man went down to see what was the matter. And when he saw the cider all running out on the floor, he said, "Why, my dear, what on earth are you doing?" "Studying," said the old woman, "that if that young man courts my daughter, and they marry, what I'll have for the wedding supper!" So the old man, he got to studying about it and forgot the cider, and still it run out. So he stayed so long the girl went down to see what was the matter, and when she saw the floor covered with cider, she said, "What on earth is the matter with you all?" "Studying,"

said the old woman, "that if that young man courts you, and you marry, what we will have for the wedding supper."

So the girl went to studying, and forgot the cider. So she stayed so long that the young man came down to see what was the matter. And when he saw all of the cider on the floor, he said, "What on earth is the matter with you all?"

"We are studying," said the old woman, "if you ask our gal to marry you, what we will have for the wedding supper." "Well! well!" said the young man. "I never saw three such fools. Now look at that cider barrel plum empty, and that good cider all on the floor. I will go away, and if I can find in all of the land three more bigger fools than you are, I'll come back and marry your daughter."

So he went away and come to a house, and he saw a man who had a wheelbarrow, trying to roll a wheelbarrow full of sunshine in his wheat house to sun his wheat. "My good man," said the young man, "what are you trying to do?" "Trying to roll in a load of sunshine to put on my wheat." "Well," said the young man, "throw open the doors and see if that ain't better!" "Well," said the man, "if I had just

knowed that sooner, it would have saved my arms many a jerk!"

So he traveled on a little farther, and saw a man with his cow by the tail, trying to pull her on a scaffold to eat some shucks.

"What are you doing?" said the young man. "Trying to pull my cow up here to get her shucks," said the man. "Well, you turn her loose, and throw them shucks down to her, and see if that ain't better," said the young man.

So he turned her loose and said, "If I had just knowed that a little sooner, it would have saved me many a hard pull."

So the young man went on and come to a garden, and saw an old woman chopping cabbage at twelve o'clock in the day with a candle lit!

"What are you doing with that candle lit, my good woman?" said the young man. "Trying to see to chop my ground," said the woman. "Well, you blow that candle out, and see if that ain't better to work by the sunlight," said the young man.

So she blew it out, and said, "If I had knowed this before, it would have saved me many a candle!"

So the young man went on, and before he got much farther he saw a man with his breeches

tied up to a post, trying to run and jump into them.

“What on earth are you trying to do?” said the young man. “Trying to get my breeches on,” said the man. “Well, you just take them down, and put one foot in, and then the other, and see if that ain’t better,” said the young man. “If I had just knowed that a little sooner, it would have saved me many a hard jump,” said the man.

“Well,” said the young man, “I won’t go any farther hunting fools. The world seems full of them. So I will go back and marry that girl, for I love her, and I find the fools ain’t all dead yet!”





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